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Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



11 Publication number:

0 527 546 A3

12

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

21 Application number: **92302126.5**

51 Int. Cl.⁵: **G06F 15/70, G06K 9/62**

22 Date of filing: **12.03.92**

30 Priority: **08.08.91 US 742323**

43 Date of publication of application:
17.02.93 Bulletin 93/07

84 Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH DE DK ES FR GB GR IT LI LU MC
NL PT SE**

88 Date of deferred publication of the search report:
21.12.94 Bulletin 94/51

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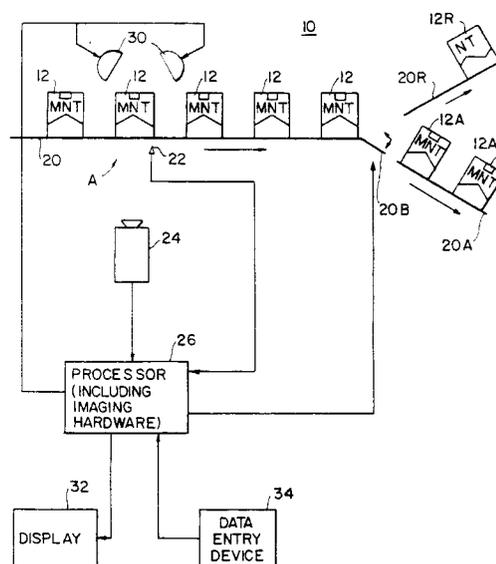
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54 **Product appearance inspection methods and apparatus employing low variance filter.**

57 Images such as product (12) images (I) are identified as substantially similar to one or more reference images by finding pixels (341a, A) which have substantially the same value or values in all or substantially all of the reference images. Image erosion (341a', 129c) and/or dilation (109c, 129e, 504) may be used in processing the reference image data to help identify pixels which can always be expected to have the same value in all acceptable images. The values associated with the corresponding pixels in a product image are combined (407, P_A) and compared (409) to an expected value (T_A). The product image is identified (412) as substantially similar to the reference image or images only if the combined values from the product image compare favorably with the expected value.

FIG. 1



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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.5)
E	EP-A-0 519 595 (PHILIP MORRIS) * column 4, line 5 - line 32 * * column 5, line 36 - column 6, line 2 * * figures 1,2A * ---	1,5-7, 13-17	G06F15/70 G06K9/62
X	WO-A-89 03099 (IMAGE-PACK LTD) * page 7, line 2 - line 10 * * page 11, line 35 - page 12, line 25 * * figures 4,5,7 * ---	1,13	
A	US-A-4 259 661 (TODD) * abstract; figures 1,2 * ---	1,5,6, 13-19	
A	EP-A-0 346 985 (PHILIPS ELECTRONIC) * abstract; figures 2,5 * ---	1	
D,A	HANDBOOK OF PATTERN RECOGNITION AND IMAGE PROCESSING, 1986, YOUNG,FU (EDS), ACADEMIC PRESS, SAN DIEGO US pages 262 - 264 HARALICK 'Statistical Image Texture Analysis' * the whole document * -----	2-4	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.5)
			G06K G06F H04N G01N B07C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 5 October 1994	Examiner Jonsson, P.O.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			